

NatureGrounds®

Putting nature into play™



A generation ago playing outdoors in nature was usually taken for granted, but times have changed. Now, nature must be deliberately designed back into children's lives.

Robin Moore
Dipl. Arch, MCP, ASLA



A unique playground initiative

Putting nature into play.

A grassroots movement advocating outdoor play in nature is spreading across the USA and Canada, as a growing body of research reveals a strong link between children's experiences of being outdoors in nature and their psychological well-being and overall development. Now more than ever, it is critical to encourage outdoor play and find ways to reconnect children to nature. In response, PlayCore is pleased to announce the first-of-its-kind NatureGrounds® program, which enables children, families, and communities to experience the many benefits of playing in nature and has partnered with the Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, NC State University, to produce the *Creating & Retrofitting Play Environments: Best Practice Guidelines* and the resources described over. NatureGrounds® Putting Nature Into Play™ provides best practice guidelines for creating and retrofitting play environments that integrate manufactured play equipment and the living landscape. The purpose of NatureGrounds is to create a dramatic shift in the standard playground development process by deliberately designing nature back into children's lives, not only to benefit children's play but also to engage communities in working together to create richer play experience for all users.



Developed with the technical assistance of the Natural Learning Initiative, a research and design assistance unit of the College of Design, North Carolina State University.

Resources

The NatureGrounds program includes many resources that collectively support the development of naturalized playgrounds

Guidebook Creating & Retrofitting Play Environments: Best Practice Guidelines

- The 48-page guidebook is an educational resource and training tool that highlights research-based design procedures for both parks and school grounds
- Cost effective design solutions to communities to support the development of new play environments and the retrofit of existing play areas
- Research and the benefits of naturalization
- NatureGrounds best practice design principles
- Ideas for creating new or retrofitting current play environments
- Playground planting principles and phased naturalization strategies
- Tips on how to manage, maintain, fund, and support your valuable resource

NatureGrounds.org

- An online, searchable plant database specific to six regions of the U.S. that can be used to explore site specific and child-friendly planting selections for new and retrofit playground projects
- Information about the research that has led to the development of NatureGrounds
- Demonstration site galleries that provide current information on naturalized playgrounds, celebrate best practice and leadership, define sustainable site design, feature key community successes, and provide inspiration for other projects
- Creative ideas for funding and managing volunteer projects
- Sources for additional resources and links

Additional Resources

- PlayCore and its family of brands are equipped to help facilitate the design process and provide additional expertise through state-of-the-art computer aided design services and field representative support



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To learn more about the NatureGrounds program, receive a NatureGrounds guidebook, or become a Demonstration Site, visit www.NatureGrounds.org.

PLAYCORE
Building communities through play.